

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAN SA 03057 292027Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
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SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 USIE-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00
/081 W

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O R 291945Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4739
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 3057

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, ES
SUBJECT: JESUITS THREATENED BY RIGHT WING-TERRORIST GROUP

REF: (A) DAO IR 6 829 0053 77, (B) CHARGE'-HICKS (ARA/CEN) TELE-
CON OF JUNE 29

1. THE EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT A DELEGATION WILL CALL ON THE
DEPARTMENT TO VOICE ITS CONCERN WITH THE STORY OUT OF EL SALVADOR
THAT PRIESTS OF THE JESUIT ORDER ARE UNDER A THREAT OF DEATH
BY THE WHITE WARRIORS UNION (UNION GUERRERA BLANCA - UGB),
AND THAT THE GOES HAS NOT TAKEN A PUBLIC STAND CONDEMNING THIS
RIGHT-WING TERRORIST THREAT. FOR POSSIBLE DEPARTMENT USE,
THE FOLLOWING IS ASAT THE EMBASSY KNOWS NOW OF THE UGB AND
AUTS REPORTED THREAT AGAINST THE JESUITS.

2. EL SALVADOR HAS A RECENT HISTORY OF ASSORTED RIGHT-WING
GROUPS PRESENTING THEMSELVES AS LOCAL COUNTERPARTS OF THE
MANO BLANCA WHICH FLOURISHED IN GUATEMALA DURING THE
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAN SA 03057 292027Z

1950-60'S FIGHT AGAINST LEFTIST TERRORISTS. IN 1975
A GROUP CALLING ITSELF FALANGE ISSUED PAMPHLETS AND THREATS
AGA IST ASSTRTED LEFTISTS BUT TOOK CREDIT FOR VERY FEW OVERT
ACTS. IN MAY OF THIS YEAR, IN CONNECTION WITH THE BORGONOVO
KIDNAPPING (SAN SALVADOR 1921), A GROUP CALLING ITSELF THE QTE
WHITE WARRIORS UNION UNQTE (UGB) ALBEARED AND DECLARED WAR
TO THE DEATH ON ALL LEFTIST TERRORISTS AND THOSE WHO SUPPORT

THEM. GUESSES AT THAT TIME AS TO THE ORIGIN AND FINANCING OF THE UGB RANGED FROM FARO (THE RIGHTIST GROUP FORMED IN JULY 1976 TO FIGHT THE GOES AGRARIAN TRANSFORMATION PROJECT), TO ELEMENTS OF THE SECURITY SERVICES THEMSELVES.

3. THE UGB MOVED FROM A PAPER ORGANIZATION TO ONE WITH A RECORD OF ACTION WITH THE MAY 12 ASSASSINATION OF FATHER ALFONSO NAVARRO OVIEDO, GUNNED DOWN IN HIS APARTMENT ALONG WITH A FIFTEEN-YEAR BOY. THE DAY AFTER THE KILLING, THE UGB REPORTEDLY ANNOUNCED ITS RESPONSIBILITY FOR NAVARRO'S DEATH IN CALLS TO THE NEWSPAPERS. THE CLAIMED MOTIVE WAS THE MAY 10 KILLING OF FOREIGN MINISTER BORGONOVO BY THE FPL. THE UGB COMMUNICATION VOWED THAT NAVARRO'S DEATH WAS QTE ONLY THE BEGINNING UNQTE. THE UGB HELD QTE THE JESUITS AND OTHER COMMUNIST PRIESTS UNQTE RESPONSIBLE FOR BORGONOVO'S MURDER.

3. THE NEXT THAT WAS HEARD FROM THE UGB WAS THE JUNE 21 MESSAGE (WHICH THE EMBASSY HAD NOT RPT NOT SEEN), PURPORTEDLY SENT TO ALL MEDIA (BUT NOT CARRIED HERE), IN WHICH THE JESUIT ORDER WAS GIVEN THIRTY DAYS TO ABANDON THE COUNTRY OR FACE ELIMINATION. THE COMMUNIQUE REPORTEDLY WARNED NOT ONLY THE JESUITS BUT ALL THOSE WHO SUPPORT THEM IN ANY WAY. IT SAID THAT JESUIT CENTERS WOULD BE QTE MILITARY TARGETS UNQTE, AND WARNED EVERYONE TO STAY AWAY FROM THEM.

4. THE UGB THREAT CAME DURING A PERIOD IN WHICH GOVERNMENT CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAN SA 03057 292027Z

AND RIGHT-WING ATTACKS AGAINST CATHOLIC CHURCH INVOLVEMENT IN DOMESTIC POLITICS WAS INCREASINGLY ZEROING IN ON THE JESUIT ORDER (SOME THIRTY PRIESTS IN NUMBER, A GOOD MANY FOREIGNERS). THE DAILY PAPERS OF THE LAST THREE WEEKS HAVE BEEN LOADED WITH ATTACHES ON THE CHURCH, ESPECIALLY THE JESUITS, AUTHORED BY FARO AND RELATED GROUPS. THE JESUITS RESPONDED WITH THEIR OWN PAID ADVERTISEMENT DEFENSE. AS RECENTLY AS MAY 21 THREE JESUIT PRIESTS WERE EXPELLED FROM THE COUNTRY, CHARGED WITH USBVERIVE INVOLVEMENT WITH CAMPESINOS IN THE AGUILARES AREA (SAN SALVADOR 2516).

5. TO DATE THE GOVERNMENT HAS MADE NO PUBLIC STATEMENT ABOUT THE UGB THREAT AGAINST THE JESUITS. THERE WAS SPECULATION IN THE PRESS THAT JESUIT PRIESTS FROM NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES WERE COMING

TO EL SALVADOR IN A SHOW OF SOLIDARITY WITH THEIR FELLOW PRIESTS. COL. SANTIVANEZ, CHIEF OF IMMIGRATION AND AN INTELLIGENCE ADVISOR TO GENERAL ROMERO, DENIED THIS STORY TO POLOFF. SANTIVANEZ ALSO SAID THE GOES HAS NO PROOF OF ACTIVE DUTY JESUIT PRIESTS' INVOLVEMENT WITH THE FPL. HE CLAIMED HOWEVER THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS EVIDENCE THAT FOUR EX-JDAUTS, ALL FOREIGNERS, ARE FPL MEMBERS.

6. COMMENT. IT IS NOT SUPRISING THAT THE JESUITS HAVE BEEN SINGLED OUT FOR SPECIAL CONDEMNATION BY RIGHT-WING GROUPS SUCH AS THE UGB. FIRST, THE ORDER IS PERCEIVED AS BEING THE FORCE BEHIND ARCHBISHOP ROMERO'S WILLINGNESS TO CONFRONT THE GOVERNMENT OVER THE DETENTION, TORTURE AND EXPULSIONS OF PRIESTS AND OTHERS. THE JESUITS ARE ALSO GIVEN THE CREDIT, OR BLAME, FOR BEING THE INTELLECTUAL AUTHORS OF LAST YEAR'S AGRARIAN TRANSFORMATION PROPOSAL. THIS CONNECTION EARNED THEM THE HATRED OF FARO. THE JESUITS ALSO HAVE HAD THE GREATEST INVOLVEMENT WITH CAMPESINOS IN AND AROUND AGUILARES.

7. HOW SERIOUS IS THE UGB THREAT? THE EMBASSY WOULD GUESS THAT THE ANSWER LIES IN HOW SERIOUS THE GOVERNMENT IS IN CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 SAN SA 03057 292027Z

WANTING TO ELIMINATE THE THREAT IT SEES IN AN ACTIVIST CHURCH VS. ITS ASSESSMENT OF HOW BADLY FURTHER MURDERS OF PRIESTS COULD DAMAGE ITS IMAGE ABROAD. ALTHOUGH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS BEHIND THE UGB, IT IS HARD NOT TO SEE SOME CONNECTION, IF ONLY A MSUALITY OF INTERESTS AND ENEMIES. THE BULLETS THAT KILLED FATHER NAVARRO WERE NINE MILLIMETER, SUPPOSEDLY THE EXCLUSIVE AMMUNITION OF GOES SECURITY SERVICES. AN EMBASSY CONTACT HAS REPORTED THAT ONE OF NAVARRO'S ASSASSINS WAS RECOGNIZED, AND HE IS A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL POLICE. THE EMBASSY BELIVES THAT IF THE GOES WERE TO GET THE WORD OUT THAT IT WAS AGAINST THE UGB CARRYING OUT ITS THREAT AGAINST THE JESUITS, THAT WOULD GO A LONG WAY TO ELIMINATING THE IMMEDIATE DANGER. FOR THE LONGER TERM, WHAT DANGER THE JESUITS FACE IN EL SALVADOR WILL DEPEND ON HOW THE INCOMING PRESIDENT VIEWS THEM AS A THREAT TO THE COUNTRY'S INTERNAL SECURITY.

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